

MONTGOMERY COUNTY
FIRE AND RESCUE COMMISSION

MINUTES

JULY 12, 2001

EXECUTIVE OFFICE BUILDING AUDITORIUM
Rockville, Maryland

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Gordon A. Aoyagi, Chairman
Ronald Ogens, Vice-Chairman
Fernando Bren
Thomas Carr
Robert L. Freeman
Len Marco
Anita Powell

STAFF PRESENT:

Neil Shorb, Staff Director
George Giebel, Program Manager
Beth Feldman, Administrative Specialist
Annette Cheng, Office Services Coordinator
Richard Melnick, OCA
Walter Wilson, OCA

OTHERS PRESENT:

Darlene Flynn, MCFRS
Chief Roger Strock, DFRS
John Horvat, Wheaton Volunteer RS
Chief Thomas Jones, Glen Echo FD
President Eric Bernard, Rockville VFD
Captain Ed Radcliffe, DFRS
Kathy Stewart, MCFRS
Vice President Robert Spence, Kensington VFD
Chief David Dwyer, DVFRS

District Chief Elwood Ey, MCFRS
Lieutenant Oscar Garcia, MCFRS
Assistant Chief Randy Wheeler, DFRS
Eileen Queenin, DFRS
Chief Dennis Urban, Bethesda FD
District Chief David Steckel, DFRS
President Terri Gartner-Surette, Damascus VFD
Chief Darron Long, Damascus VFD
Merril Oliver, MCFRS

100 - CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Fire and Rescue Commission was called to order by Chair Aoyagi at 7:10 p.m. in the Lobby Auditorium of the Executive Office Building in Rockville, Maryland.

Fire Administrator Aoyagi reported that Commissioner Sterling had an excused absence for tonight's meeting.

101- Comments – the Fire and Rescue Commissioners

Commissioner Bren reported that he had attended the Maryland State Firemen's Association Convention at Ocean City, Maryland in June, 2001 and continued to be impressed with their long standing traditions and numbers of volunteers throughout the State. He also attended the graduation ceremony of Recruit Class 19 and was impressed with family support and excitement of those graduating. He enjoyed both experiences. He recommended everyone's participation in future events.

102-Report of the Chairman

Fire Administrator Aoyagi sadly reported that County Executive Doug Duncan's father recently passed away, and indicated that he will provide information on the date and time of the viewing to the Commissioners either by email or by page. The funeral is scheduled for Saturday morning, July 14, 2001 at 10:30 a.m. at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Rockville.

- FY02 MCFRS Financial Milestones

Fire Administrator Aoyagi briefed the Commissioners on the FY02 MCFRS financial milestones. A calendar of events was provided showing milestones for CIP Operating Budget and Senator Amoss Funds. Important dates for the month of September include: September 6 – submissions for the FY03 CIP, and September 15 – MCFRS Strategic Planning retreat.

- Deductibles for MCFRS Insurance Program

Fire Administrator Aoyagi reported that he met with VFIS, the MCFRS insurance carrier, to review various options on the MCFRS insurance program. Due to substantial increases in claims for vehicle losses and portable equipment, changes in the deductibles for insurance are being considered. He will present the FRC with the specific pricing for those items at the August meeting.

- LOSAP Administration Executive Regulation

The LOSAP Administration Executive Regulation was removed from tonight's agenda and was deferred to the next monthly FRC meeting. The Fire Administrator's office received comments today from Council staff regarding several technical clarifications. Staff has not had an opportunity to review those comments and will present the regulation at the next meeting.

- Nominating Committee – FRC Vice-Chair

Fire Administrator Aoyagi had appointed a nominating committee consisting of Commissioners Carr and Sterling to nominate a Vice-Chair to be elected at the FRC meeting in August.

Commissioner Carr reported that the Committee nominated Commissioner Bren to become the next Vice-Chair of the FRC to serve a one-year term.

103- Approval of Minutes of June 14, 2001 Meeting

Associate County Attorney Melnick offered some technical changes which he will provide directly to Staff.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Ogens to approve the minutes with technical changes of the June 14, 2001, meeting of the Fire and Rescue Commission. MOTION SECONDED by Commissioner Marco and PASSED unanimously.

200-CONSENT CALENDAR

There were no consent calendar items on the agenda.

300- FIRE AND RESCUE COMMISSION COMMITTEE REPORTS

301- Operations

Commissioner Ogens reported the Operations Committee met on June 26, 2001. The Operations Committee discussed the following items: unit staffing request from Chief Baker of the Burtonsville VFD; Deputy Chief Allwang's presentation on the Council of Governments Fire and Rescue Services Mutual Aid Operational Plan; issues regarding units responding on an assigned operational channel.

302- Human Resources, Safety and Training

Commissioner Powell reported that the HRST Committee met on July 9, 2001. Updates were provided on Safety/Driver Training, the Wellness Initiative, and the Medical Standards for Volunteers.

Commissioner Marco reported that the System Safety Committee continues to work on the Driver Training Manual, and is considering the input provided by Brian Raughley of Willis Corroon, the MCFRS insurance broker. Commissioner Carr reported that the procurement process for the purchase of 16 commercial grade treadmills is complete. The Joint Health and Safety Committee is evaluating the existing treadmills in all stations. Criteria has been developed for placement of these treadmills into certain stations. Commissioner Carr reported that some preparation is required and coordination will occur with the affected LFRD.

Commissioner Carr reported that four (4) LFRDs have approved grants to purchase treadmills through the Senator William Amoss funds process and the condition of such grant funding was to standardize the type of treadmill purchased.

303- Finance, Technology and Planning

Commissioner Bren reported that the FTP meeting in July was cancelled and has been rescheduled for August 2, 2001, and the August FTP meeting has been changed to August 23, 2001.

Commissioner Bren provided a substantive report on the status of the four subcommittees of the FTP Committee.

400- BUSINESS ITEMS

401- Use and Wearing of Traffic Safety Vests During Incidents on Arterials, Highways, and Streets Interim Policy

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Marco to adopt Resolution FY02-02, Interim Policy No. 26-07: Use and Wearing of Traffic Safety Vest During Incidents on Arterials, Highways,

and Streets, with the adoption of a standardized minimum 1" wide reflective striping across the front and back of the safety vest, subject to applicable collective bargaining procedures and the County Attorney's approval of its form and legality. MOTION SECONDED by Commissioner Ogens and PASSED unanimously.

402- Station Location and Resource Allocation Work Group Phase 2B Report – Fire Station 11

A report was made to the Commission by District Chief Buddy Ey regarding the location and service deployment analysis for Station 11.

A MOTION was made By Commissioner Ogens to adopt the Station Location and Resource Allocation Work Group Phase 2B Report in Fire Station Area 11. MOTION SECONDED by Commissioner Freeman and PASSED unanimously.

403- Interim Policy for FRC Appeals

On July 13, 2000, the Commission adopted the Interim Procedure for Appeal Hearings, FRC policy No. 01-06, which was to be effective for a period of one year.

Since a permanent executive regulation regarding procedures for appeals to the FRC per section 21-7 of the County Code has not yet been developed, the Fire Administrator recommended that the existing interim appeals policy be extended for an additional 180 days.

Commissioner Ogens agreed that the extension of the interim policy would enable the Commission to continue to hear the two pending appeals under the current guidelines, and would permit the FRC to gain experience under the interim procedures which will be helpful in developing final procedures.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Ogens to extend the Interim Policy for FRC Appeals No. 01-06 for a period 180 days, or until a permanent executive regulation is adopted, which ever occurs first. MOTION SECONDED by Commissioner Carr and PASSED unanimously.

404- FY02 Budget Impact on KVFD Staffing

At the June 14, 2001 meeting of the FRC, a KVFD letter requesting intervention of the FRC regarding the FY02 operating budget was reviewed. In response, the Commission requested that President Andrew White of the Kensington VFD be present at the July 12, 2001 FRC meeting to explain why the KVFD had requested a staffing reduction by communicating directly to the County Council, without prior consultation with the Commission or the Fire Administrator, and then attempted to seek relief from those reductions from the FRC when the approved FY02 budget was implemented.

Commissioner Ogens advised the Commission that the KVFD had filed a lawsuit against the Fire Administrator, requesting that the Circuit Court enter a temporary order to restore the staffing at KVFD. The Circuit Court denied the KVFD's request. Commissioner Ogens also noted that KVFD had filed an appeal to the FRC concerning the Fire Administrator's decision regarding the staffing reductions. He suggested that in fairness to KVFD and because of the pending appeal that the discussion on the staffing reduction at KVFD be deferred until after the appeal is resolved.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Ogens to defer discussion with the KVFD President regarding staffing reductions in the FY02 operating budget but the item is subject to recall by a majority vote of the Commissioners. MOTION SECONDED by Commissioner Powell and PASSED unanimously.

Commissioner Freeman asked whether it is appropriate to inquire about the status of the current staffing levels at night at KVFD and how KVFD is achieving the volunteer staffing at Station 5. Commissioner Ogens indicated that he believed discussion on this matter is proper.

In response to the question on the current staffing levels at KVFD, Vice President Robert Spence reported that staffing efforts at KVFD have been successful. KVFD's on-going effort is to get staffing commitments days in advance to ensure that additional staffing is available when needed. He stated that the biggest challenge was the shortage of drivers for large apparatus.

Commissioner Freeman asked if KVFD has any plan to re-adjust its budget to relieve the staffing reduction if needed. Vice President Spence replied that KVFD has not examined that issue.

Chief Strock reported that he met with Chief Stanton and President White on June 26, 2001 to discuss the impact of the staffing reduction at KVFD, and agreed that whenever MCFRS has at least three career personnel left over in Districts 2 and 4 – a unit officer, a driver, and a firefighter - they will be assigned to Station 5.

As a result of County Attorney Richard Melnick's involvement in representing Montgomery County in the Circuit Court action regarding the staffing reduction at KVFD, he will not represent the FRC on the KVFD's two pending appeals. Assistant County Attorney Walter Wilson will respond to any requests for advice from the FRC on these two appeals.

500- FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES REPORTS

501- DVFRS Chief

Chief Dwyer sadly reported that former Chief Cameron of the Bethesda FD had passed away.

He advised the Commissioners that the following individuals are the newly elected LFRD Presidents and Chiefs: Tom Rhodes as Chief of Sandy Spring VFD; John Knott, Chief of Silver Spring VFD; Dennis Minor, Chief of Upper Montgomery County VFD; and Lee Hunter, President of Cabin John VFD.

502- DFRS Chief

Chief Strock reported that over 500 people had attended the two graduation ceremonies on June 29, 2001 and thanked everyone who attended.

503- Report of the Fire Board

Vice Chair Bernard reported that he had attended the graduation ceremony on June 29, 2001.

He stated that he was disappointed that two agenda items - "Training Opportunities" and "Policy Development for the OIA and COM/PIO", were not listed on the Business Items of tonight's FRC agenda for discussion, as the Fire Board had requested at the June 14, 2001 FRC meeting.

504- Report of the Montgomery County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association

There was no report.

505- Report of the Montgomery County Career Fire/Rescue Officers Association

There was no report.

506-Report of the Montgomery County Career Fire Fighters Association

There was no report.

**A MOTION was made by Commissioner Marco to adjourn the meeting. MOTION
SECONDED by Commissioner Carr and PASSED unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gordon A. Aoyagi
Chairman